



REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
818 W. 7TH ST., LOS ANGELES, CA 90017 • (213) 236-1868 • www.scag.ca.gov

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Orange County Transportation Commission: Charles Smith, Orange County

Riverside County Transportation Commission: Robin Lowe, Hemet

Ventura County Transportation Commission: Bill Davis, Simi Valley

MEETING OF DECEMBER 4, 2003

RELEASE OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

The California Environmental Quality Act requires SCAG to prepare and circulate an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan. The EIR must identify the probable significant environmental effects of implementing the projects, programs, and policies included in the Plan. It is important to note that the baseline for determining significance in CEQA is current conditions. Furthermore, the EIR must evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the Plan that reduce environmental effects and must also include mitigation measures designed to minimize significant effects. The 2004 RTP Program EIR will fulfill these requirements and will provide a regional-scale, programmatic, environmental planning tool that will offer useful analysis for subsequent, site-specific analysis, and will ultimately help the Region minimize adverse environmental effects. It will also provide a framework for updating various chapters of the Regional Comprehensive Plan & Guide.

A 45-day public comment period is scheduled to begin in mid-December, with the public comment period ending 45 days after circulation of the Draft. A joint RTP/EIR public hearing will be held during the public comment period at SCAG in mid-January, 2004.

OPERATION JUMP-START AND THE 2004 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)

“Operation Jump-Start,” as currently envisioned by SCAG, would serve as a vehicle to facilitate the implementation of projects included in the Region’s adopted Plan and deemed capable of generating their own revenue streams. This implementation process does not establish what projects are to be included in the 2004 RTP; rather, projects already identified for inclusion in the adopted 2004 RTP would be evaluated at a later time to decipher the application of the “Operation Jump-Start” process. The Regional Council approved dissociating “Operation Jump-Start” from the development of the 2004 RTP. Staff will continue evaluating Jump-Start as a process for facilitating the implementation of qualifying Plan projects.

NO MEETING IN THE MONTH OF JANUARY

The Regional Council will not meet during the month of January. The next meeting is scheduled for FEBRUARY 5, 2004 at SCAG Offices. Happy Holidays!